



Press Release

THE UNITED STATES JOINS THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH TO LAUNCH 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

DHAKA, NOVEMBER 28-- One in three women around the world will experience some form of gender-based violence in her lifetime. In some countries, that number is as high as 70 percent. Beginning on November 25, 2012, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ending on December 10, 2012, International Human Rights Day, the United States joins the Government of Bangladesh and the global community to observe the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. The campaign promotes international cooperation to end gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and USAID, the premier development organization of the United States, through Plan Bangladesh, are organizing the national observance of “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” on November 28 at Patiya College Ground, Chittagong. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honorable State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) will be the Chief Guest and U.S. Ambassador Dan Mozena, will be the Special Guest.

This year’s slogan for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence is “From peace in the home to peace in the world.” Plan Bangladesh, USAID’s implementing partner for its Protecting Human Rights (PHR) program, will host the event in Patiya to disseminate the key message: a violence-free family is the cornerstone to building a peaceful world. National and local government officials, community and religious leaders including teachers, police and local citizens will participate in the event in Chittagong on November 28. The full-day program will include songs, dance and theater performances on the theme of domestic violence against women. In addition, a fair will be organized at the venue to provide information and domestic violence support services offered by NGOs and government institutions. Organizers anticipate that approximately 1,000 participants will attend the event.

Since 2011, USAID, through its Protecting Human Rights (PHR) program, has been supporting government efforts in Bangladesh to reduce the prevalence and effects of violence against women. The integrated approach includes advocacy efforts at both the grass roots and national levels; engaging key stakeholders including lawyers, judges, medical professionals and members of the police; helping women who survive domestic violence to seek justice and obtain services such as shelter, medical care and livelihood support and; mobilizing people against the heinous activities of domestic violence and other violations of human rights.

Gender-based violence is a global pandemic that cuts across ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and religion. It can threaten women and girls at any point in their life, beginning with selective abortion of a female fetus to female genital mutilation/cutting to abuse by intimate partners. Gender violence vastly increases women's risk for a range of serious health conditions, including reproductive health problems, miscarriages, and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. There also are strong linkages to maternal mortality as well as poor child health and morbidity.

The U.S. Government, through its principal development agency the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided over \$6 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2012, USAID provided more than \$200 million to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: expand food security and economic opportunity, promote democratic institutions and practices, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.
